

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 3255

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: SANJAY ON THE ROAD

SUMMARY: SANJAY GANDHI COMPLETED A TWO-MONTH SERIES OF VISITS THROUGH EIGHT INDIAN STATES LAST WEEK, BEING GREETED BY THE HIGHEST OFFICIALS IN EACH STATE AND BY THRONGS OF ADMIRERS AND HANGERS-ON. HE REPEATEDLY STRESSED THE SAME THEMES: HARD WORK, UNITY, AN EMPHASIS ON RESULTS NOT IDEOLOGY, NATIONALISM. HE CONTINUED TO BRUSH ASIDE COMMUNIST SUPPORT AND HAS PUT NEW PRESSURES ON COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES THROUGH WITHDRAWAL OF ADVERTISEMENTS BY GOI AND STATE GOVERNMENTS AROUND DELHI. HE GIVES LITTLE EMPHASIS IN HIS SPEECHES TO DEMOCRACY OR ELECTIONS. WE ARE TOLD HE LOVES THE ADULATION HE RECEIVES ON THESE TRAVELS AND THAT HIS MOTHER THINKS SOME OF THE FULSOME PRAISE SHOULD BE TONED DOWN A BIT. THERE ARE RUMORS OF STRAINS BETWEEN MRS. GANDHI AND SANJAY BUT WE ARE DISINCLINED TO GIVE THEM MUCH WEIGHT AND HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF SUCH STRAIN. SANJAY HAS THUS FAR DEVOTED LITTLE ATTENTION OR THOUGHT EITHER PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY TO FOREIGN POLICY, BUT HE HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT INDO-US RELATIONS TO SEVERAL VISITORS AND HAS ASKED PRIVATELY FOR SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. END SUMMARY. CONFIDENTIAL

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1. LAST WEEK SANJAY GANDHI COMPLETED A TWO-MONTH SERIES OF VISITS AROUND INDIA WITH STOPS IN ANDHRA PRADESH, MAHARASHTRA, KARNATAKA, ASSAM, HIMACHAL PRADESH, BIHAR, WEST BENGAL AND MADHYA PRADESH. HE WILL BE STARTING A NEW

ROUND LATER THIS MONTH. THE RECEPTION CEREMONIES ALONG THE WAY, THE SPEECHES, THE CROWDS, PUBLICITY AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE ORCHESTRATED BY STATE AND PARTY OFFICIALS FOR MRS. GANDHI'S TOURS. CHIEF MINISTERS, STATE CONGRESS PARTY AND YOUTH CONGRESS OFFICE BEARERS LED STATE DELEGATIONS IN ENTHUSIASTICALLY GREETING SANJAY AT AIRPORTS. SANJAY WAS USUALLY ACCOMPANIED BY ONE AND OFTEN BY MORE GOI MINISTERS. BUNTINGS, FLAGS, PLACARD BEARERS, PUBLICITY RESOURCES AND INTENSE SECURITY WERE AVAILABLE AT EACH OF SANJAY'S PUBLIC APPEARANCES. CONGRESS POLITICIANS AND YOUTH LEADERS MANEUVERED TO GET ON HIS APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE OR AT LEAST TO OBTAIN AN INTRODUCTION. GOVERNMENT TV AND RADIO PROMINENTLY COVERED HIS SPEECHES AND ENGAGEMENTS. (40 MINUTES ON TV FOR HIS VISIT IN CALCUTTA). BARRING THE CPI PRESS, NEWSPAPERS AROUND THE COUNTRY DUTIFULLY PROVIDED FRONTPAGE COVERAGE. DURING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, SANJAY GAVE LENGTHY INTERVIEWS TO TIME, BLITZ, ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA AND A YOUTH CONGRESS JOURNAL.

2. IN HIS INTERVIEWS AND PUBLIC SPEECHES TO YOUTH RALLIES, CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE NEWSPAPERMEN AND OTHERS, SANJAY DID NOT VARY FROM THE THEMES HE HAS DWELLED ON SINCE THE EMERGENCY: UNITY IN CONGRESS AND THE COUNTRY; LESS TALK AND MORE WORK; ECONOMIC DECISIONS SHOULD BE GEARED SOLELY TO RESULTS, NOT TO ISMS, WHETHER THE PUBLIC OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS INVOLVED; THE ENERGIES OF INDIAN YOUTH SHOULD BE CHANNELIZED FOR CONSTRUCTIVE ENDS, INCLUDING SUPPORT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM LEGISLATION; FOREIGN POWERS SHOULD REFRAIN FROM CRITICIZING THE EMERGENCY OR INTERVENING IN INDIAN AFFAIRS - "WE WANT ONLY TO GO OUR WAY; THEY CAN GO THEIRS," HE SAID IN A JANUARY 11 INTERVIEW WITH "INTELLECTUALS" IN BOMBAY.

3. IN CALCUTTA SANJAY AGAIN ATTACKED THE COMMUNISTS FOR DESERTING THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND ALLYING WITH THE BRITISH IMPERIAL POWER IN 1942. (NEW DELHI 2683) REFERRING
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TO STRAINED CONGRESS-CPI "ALLIANCE" IN BHOPAL, HE REMARKED THAT, "IF ANYONE SUPPORTS THE CONGRESS, WE SHOULD TAKE THE SUPPORT. BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN WE HAVE TO SUPPORT THEM IN RETURN." CPI PUBLICATIONS, NOTABLY PATRIOT AND LINK IN THE CAPITAL AND KALANTAR IN CALCUTTA, IGNORED HIS VISITS. A PATRIOT ASSISTANT EDITOR TOLD US THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN HIS NEWSPAPER AND SANJAY HAVE HIT A NEW LOW. HE CLAIMED THAT, ON SANJAY'S INSTRUCTIONS, GOI PUBLICITY MACHINERY, PUNJAB, HARAYANA, AND DELHI GOVERNMENTS HAVE CUTOFF GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING TO THE PATRIOT. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, SIMILAR PRESSURES ARE NOW BEING APPLIED ON MOVIE HOUSE OWNERS AND OTHER SOURCES OF PRIVATE FIRMS TO CEASE ADVERTISING IN THE PATRIOT. THE PATRIOT EDITOR HAS TOLD HIS STAFF THAT HE WILL NOT CAPTULATE TO SANJAY'S PRESSURES.

4. IN HIS PUBLIC ADDRESSES, SANJAY REPORTEDLY SPOKE MORE FORCEFULLY THAN HE HAS PREVIOUSLY, AND WITH COMPLETE SELF-CONFIDENCE. WHILE REPEATING THE SAME THEMES RECOUNTED ABOVE, HIS ORATORY REVOLVED AROUND AN INWARD-LOOKING "GO IT ALONE" APPROACH FOR THE CONGRESS PARTY AND THE COUNTRY, WITH A STRONG DOSAGE OF PATRIOTIC RECOLLECTIONS OF THE GREAT INDIAN LEADERS. (ONE BRITISH OBSERVER OF SANJAY'S SPEECH IN CALCUTTA CLAIMED THAT SANJAY'S STYLE AND STATEMENTS REMINDED HIM OF MUSSOLINI'S PRESENTATIONS IN ITALY'S TOWNS AND CITIES BEFORE COMING TO POWER IN THE EARLY TWENTIES.) SANJAY MADE FEW REFERENCES TO THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY AND "RECONCILIATION" WITH THE OPPOSITION, IN CONTRAST TO HIS MOTHER'S PERIODIC COMMENTS ON THESE TOPICS, MOST RECENTLY IN MAHARASHTRA (NEW DELHI 2738). HE DENOUNCED THE MASS POLITICS OF THE PAST OR, AS HE PUT IT IN BHOPAL, "THE POLITICS OF THE VOTE" WHICH HAVE WORKED AGAINST THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY. HIS REMARKS SEEMED TO ENCOURAGE INDIANS TO SEEK A SELF-IDENTIFICATION GROUNDED IN INDIGENOUS INDIAN HISTORY AND TRADITIONS, AND HE CALLED FOR REJECTION OF IDEOLOGIES SPAWNED ABROAD--WHETHER OF THE RIGHT OR LEFT.

5. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO SANJAY'S PERSONAL PR ASSISTANT WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM ON SEVERAL OF HIS TRIPS, SANJAY ENORMOUSLY ENJOYS THE ADULATION AND ACCLAIM HE RECEIVES ON HIS TRAVELS. ONE BRITISH VISITOR WAS TOLD BY MRS. GANDHI LAST WEEK THAT SHE HAD RECENTLY TOLD THE ARRANGERS OF HER TRIPS CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT THEY SHOULD HALT ALL THE FULSOME PRAISE ON POSTERS AND PLACARDS, AND THAT SANJAY WOULD HAVE TO DO THE SAME. INEVITABLY, THERE ARE RUMORS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOTHER AND SON AND SPECULATION THAT STRAINS BETWEEN THEM MAY GROW. WE BELIEVE THIS IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT INDEED THE PM AND SANJAY ARE TAKING SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT APPROACHES IN THEIR SPEECHES. BUT WE ARE NOT AWARE THUS FAR OF ANY EVIDENCE FOR CONFLICT BETWEEN THEM, NOR THAT THEIR RELATIONS ARE STRAINED. THE PM, HOWEVER, IS CLEARLY GIVING SANJAY HIS HEAD AND WATCHING TO SEE HOW HE DEVELOPS. THERE HAD BEEN SOME SPECULATION A FEW WEEKS AGO THAT THE COMMUNISTS WERE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT SANJAY THAN THEY HAD BEEN THE PREVIOUS FALL. THIS SPECULATION HAS VANISHED AND THE CPI CONTINUES TO BE PLAINLY (AND INCREASINGLY PUBLICLY) IRRITATED AT YOUNG MR. GANDHI. IT NOW REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER SANJAY WILL RUN FOR ONE OF THE RAJYA SABHA SEATS WHICH ARE TO BE FILLED IN A NUMBER OF STATES AT THE END OF MARCH (A SEAT FROM HARYANA IS OFTEN MENTIONED).

6. EXCEPT FOR THE THEMES DESCRIBED IN PARA 2 ABOVE, SANJAY HAS STAYED AWAY FROM FOREIGN POLICY AND WE ARE TOLD THIS IS TRUE IN HIS PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND MEETINGS AS WELL. WE ARE TOLD BY TWO SEPARATE SOURCES WHO HAVE BOTH TALKED WITH

HIM, HOWEVER, AHHAT HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT INDO-US RELATIONS,
IS DISTURBED AT THE IMAGE OF INDIA WHICH HAS BEEN DEVELOPED
IN THE US SINCE THE EMERGENCY, AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE RELATIONS
IMPROVE. HE ASKED BOTH OUR SOURCES FOR THEIR WRITTEN SUG-
GESTIONS ON HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE.
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